

SPEECH

OF

HON. L. D. CAMPBELL, OF OHIO,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEB. 17, 1854,

*In reply to Mr. STEPHENS, of Georgia, in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union.*

Mr. STEPHENS having concluded his remarks,

Mr. CAMPBELL sought the floor.

Mr. KERR, (who was entitled to the floor under the arrangement entered into yesterday.) If the gentleman from Ohio desires to address the committee in opposition to the views which we have just heard, I will yield the floor to enable him to do so, if I can resume it after he has concluded his remarks.

The CHAIRMAN. Is it the pleasure of the committee that the gentleman from North Carolina shall be considered as entitled to the floor when the gentleman from Ohio concludes?

[Cries of "Agreed!" "Agreed!"]

The CHAIRMAN. Then the gentleman from Ohio can proceed.

Mr. GIDDINGS. Will my colleague yield me five minutes of his time, to enable me to set the gentleman from Georgia right as to an historical fact?

Mr. CAMPBELL. I prefer not to yield the floor at this time.

Mr. PECKHAM. I desire to move that the committee do now rise, that we may go into Committee of the Whole House on the Private Calendar.

The CHAIRMAN. Will the gentleman from Ohio yield the floor for that purpose?

Mr. CAMPBELL. No, sir; I cannot. Although I should be glad to have time to prepare, all things considered, I prefer to reply just now.

Mr. PECKHAM. I will not press the motion.

Mr. CAMPBELL said: Mr. Chairman, in reverence for the Constitution of my country, and in devotion to the union of these States, I yield to no one—not even to the honorable gentleman from Georgia [Mr. STEPHENS] who has just closed his remarks. All the promptings of my nature remind me of the tender ties which bind me to those who shed their blood on the battle-fields of the Revolution in both sections of the country, North and South. When I look back upon those glorious struggles for freedom in the past, and forward to the blessings which good government may secure

to generations in the future, I feel that the highest duty which devolves upon me is to aid in protecting that Constitution, and in preserving that Union which were the fruits of the exertions of our revolutionary sires. And never, sir, never, until I am satisfied that the purposes for which the Constitution was formed have been abandoned, and the just powers of the Government have been subverted from their pure and holy original purposes, can I lend myself, directly or remotely, to the schemes of those who would propose that the union of those States shall be dissevered. The purpose of those who established the Government was to promote the cause of human freedom—not to perpetuate injustice and oppression.

There are occasions when we should speak plainly. Such an one is now presented to me; and I say, in all candor, to the gentleman from Georgia, and to his colleagues of the South, that whenever they succeed in establishing, as a fixed policy of the Union, a system by which freemen of the North are to be decoyed under their fidelity to the stars and stripes, into wars upon sister Republics, in order that we may dispoil them of their territory that slavery may be perpetuated and extended, they may set me down as a disunionist! Ay, sir, as an uncompromising disunionist! Whenever the powers of this Government are to be exercised for the unholy purpose of extending injustice and wrong in any form, animated by the glorious example of a patriotic ancestry, for one, I will raise the standard of rebellion and revolution! I fear the gentleman does not fully understand northern character. He tauntingly reminds me that the North were driven by the South in the contests of 1850, and insinuates that, when it is deemed necessary, the North will again yield acquiescence to southern dictation. I beg to say to him that even in that North—servile as she may seem to him—servile as I admit, in deep humility, she has been in past struggles here—there is a point at which even their "forbearance ceases to be a virtue." The Oriental story informs us that it was the last ounce which broke the back of the camel; and I caution gentlemen to beware that they do not over-

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load what they mistakingly consider *northern servility*.

Mr. Chairman, the honorable gentleman from Georgia entertains strange, if not wild and fanatical ideas as to the purposes which the Constitution and the Union were designed to promote. He claims that one of these was the perpetuation of slavery, and its extension over territories which it did not occupy at the time the Government was formed. Here I take issue with him; and by the kindness of the gentleman from North Carolina, [Mr. KERR,] sustained by the unanimous consent of the committee in according to me the privilege of reply, I shall proceed, without that preparation which I might otherwise have made, to the discussion of his proposition, that the Missouri compromise ought to be repealed.

In the first place, let me say, sir, having for four years been an admirer of the high order of talents which the honorable gentleman possesses, and of the eloquence which he summons to his aid, though not acting in concert with him on this floor, I have not failed to observe closely his course upon this absorbing topic of slavery. And having thus observed it, the exciting character of his speech this morning amazes me. No one was more active than he in procuring signatures to the celebrated Union party pledge of 1851, which pledged undying hostility to every man who did not indorse, as a "finality to slavery agitation," through all time, the acts of 1850, called "the compromise." Again when, for weeks, the succeeding Congress was deeply excited over the resolutions, declaring those measures a *final settlement*, no one was more active in their support than he. And yet again, his personal influence had much to do with the erection of the party platform of 1852, which declared:

For the Democracy:

"That the Democratic party will resist all attempts at renewing, in Congress or out of it, the agitation of the slavery question, under whatever shape or color the attempt may be made."

And also, for the Whigs:

"We deprecate all further agitation of the questions thus settled, as dangerous to our peace, and will discountenance all efforts to continue or renew such agitation, whenever, wherever, or however made."

And with what cordiality did the honorable gentleman approve the following passage in President Pierce's message, at the opening of this session of Congress, after referring to the agitation of the slavery question through which the country had recently passed:

"But notwithstanding differences of opinion and sentiment, which then existed in relation to details and specific provisions, the acquiescence of distinguished citizens, whose devotion to the Union can never be doubted, has given renewed vigor to our institutions, and restored a sense of repose and security to the public mind throughout the Confederacy. That this repose is to suffer no shock during my official term, if I have power to avert it, those who place me here may be assured."

And now, sir, this morning the honorable gentleman comes into this Hall from a bed of sickness, and declares that we must again agitate. He advocates the speedy passage of a measure repealing an act which has been acquiesced in for a third of a century, without submitting that question of repeal to the people—the repeal of the Missouri compromise, which excludes slavery from the territory north of 36° 30'—a measure which is calculated to produce, and which will produce, throughout the entire North, a wilder degree of

excitement on the slavery question than has ever before been known. This is the honorable gentleman's "finality in its totality" of the "compromises" of 1850. This is the "harmony," this the "repose" which the humbug platform, pledges, resolves, and Executive messages have promised the people. This is the practical effect of the "healing" process which was applied to the "bleeding wounds," in 1850.

Mr. Chairman, the gentlemen who claim the repeal of the Missouri compromise assume that the clause in the act which excludes slavery from the territory north of 36° 30' is in violation of the Constitution. Knowing, as I do full well, the high reputation of the gentleman as a constitutional lawyer, I had hoped that the committee would have been favored with some arguments upon this important point. But he has wholly failed to present any; and leaving that point, he has overhauled and read from the Journals of Congress for the last thirty years, to show the character of the votes which have been given on the subject of slavery and the admission of slave States into the Union. In reply to all that he has read and said on these subjects, I need but say that whatever may have been the character of these votes, I have the authority of the gentleman's pledges, his votes and his speeches, to show that all these items were canceled and settled by the measures of 1850, and that his principle of "finality" bars their introduction now. He is committed against "reopening" those subjects "in Congress or out of it," and I charge that all he has read or said is in direct violation of those platforms and pledges to which he solemnly committed himself.

Now, sir, notwithstanding the gentleman has not uttered a syllable to substantiate his position on the constitutional question, I will proceed briefly to examine it. As the gentleman is unwell, and desires to leave the Hall, with his permission, I will propound to him a question or two touching the constitutionality of the Missouri compromise. The gentleman assumes that the establishment of the Missouri compromise line was in violation of the Constitution. I ask him whether he did not, in the session of 1850, propose to extend that line and the principle of that act, through the territories acquired from Mexico to the Pacific ocean?

Mr. STEPHENS. I was willing to go for it.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Did you not propose it? Did you not advocate it?

Mr. STEPHENS. I was for it.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Very well. The answer is sufficient for the point which I now make. In the opening of that Congress, we all remember that for weeks this House was in a state of revolution—unable to organize, because of these sectional difficulties. When a Speaker was elected, we were summoned to his desk, and with uplifted hand, before Almighty God, were sworn to support the Constitution of the United States. I should like to know how the gentleman, having sworn to support that instrument, was yet willing to violate its provisions for any purpose?

Mr. STEPHENS. I did not say whether I regarded it as constitutional or unconstitutional.

Mr. CAMPBELL. If you regarded the Missouri compromise as unconstitutional, how could you vote for it and support it? Or how could it be constitutional *then*, and unconstitutional *now*?

Mr. STEPHENS. I distinctly stated, in my remarks, that the subject of the constitutionality of the Wilmot proviso was a question which I had never argued here, or before my constituents. I told them that I occupied the same ground upon that subject that Lord Chatham did upon the subject of the taxation of the colonies, when he said, that whether the British Parliament had the power or not to tax them, it was not a question of power with him. That was what I said in my speech. I did not say that it was unconstitutional, but I said that it was wrong.

Mr. CAMPBELL. You say now that the South took the position that the Missouri compromise was unconstitutional.

Mr. STEPHENS. I said a majority of the South.

Mr. CAMPBELL. A majority of the South. Well, I have understood that the gentleman from Georgia took the same position in private conversation. Such is certainly the position assumed by those members who seek its repeal now, but supported and voted for extending it then.

Mr. BAYLY, of Virginia, (Mr. CAMPBELL yielding the floor at his request.) With respect to the position of the gentleman from Georgia, [Mr. STEPHENS,] if he will excuse me for saying a word or two upon this matter, I recollect, at a meeting of the southern members of Congress, that the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. STEPHENS] and myself were members of the same committee. I drew up the resolutions, and I recollect showing them to the gentleman from Georgia. It was asserted in those resolutions that, whether the Wilmot proviso was constitutional or not, it was wrong; and the gentleman from Georgia said that was the true point.

Mr. CAMPBELL. I know nothing of what was done or said in caucuses of southern members. I speak, by the record, of what was done in this Hall, where we act under the restraints and solemnities of our oath of office.

I am free to confess, sir, that I could never find any written clause in the Constitution which authorized Congress to draw a line through our Territories, and legislate slavery into one side of that line and out of the other. I hold that Congress may exclude slavery from the Territories, but that there is no power to authorize its introduction into them. Nor have I been able to trace anything in the debates of the convention, or in the early history of the country, which would lead to the conclusion that it was ever the design that the Government should have any power to extend, in any manner, the area of slavery.

In my remarks four years ago, when the proposition was made to extend the Missouri line through to the Pacific, and advocated by both the gentlemen from Georgia and Virginia, [Mr. STEPHENS and Mr. BAYLY,] I put the question, and called for an exhibition of the constitutional power to make such an arrangement in reference to that territory. Sir, I planted myself then upon the broad doctrine of the framers of the Constitution; that the original purpose of this Government, in the formation of the union of the States, was to extend the blessings of civil liberty, and to diminish the evils of and limit or contract the area of human slavery. It was for this reason that I opposed the gentleman's proposition then to extend the Missouri line, and planted myself firmly upon the position

that Congress had the power, and ought to exercise it, to exclude slavery from every foot of territory belonging to the Government. And yet, sir, whilst I confess I have never been able to convince my mind that any act of Congress which provided for slavery in territories, in any latitude, was authorized expressly or indirectly by the Constitution, yet a long acquiescence by the States and the people in acts like that of 1820, may give to them, as compacts, a validity as binding as the Constitution itself. To illustrate this position, I will refer honorable gentlemen to a case in point. The Constitution confers no power to acquire foreign territory. I quote high authority to sustain me. When alluding to the acquisition of Louisiana, Mr. Jefferson, in his letter to Mr. Breckinridge of 12th August, 1803, says:

"The Constitution has made no provision for our holding foreign territory, still less for incorporating foreign nations into our Union. The Executive, in seizing the fugitive occurrence which so much advances the good of the country, has done an act beyond the Constitution."—*Vol. 3, p. 512.*

The acquisition of Louisiana was an act "*beyond the Constitution!*" It was an extra-constitutional act, rendered proper, as was thought then, by the exigencies and necessities of the case. The constitutionality of the subsequent acquisitions of Florida, of Texas, and of the Territories, under the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, can be placed on no other ground than an exigency demanding for the common good the exercise of a power "*beyond the Constitution!*"—on no other ground than the "*higher law!*" of national necessity. Each of these acts, according to Mr. Jefferson, was beyond the Constitution! But the people, by a long acquiescence, gave to those acts a validity akin to that which attaches to the Constitution itself. I contend that this principle applies with equal force to the Missouri compromise which excludes slavery from Nebraska and Kansas. Even though the act was "*beyond the Constitution,*" an acquiescence on the part of the people, in every section of the Union, as it has been, has given to it a force and power as binding as the act itself which secured the territory from France—as binding as the covenants of the Constitution. Is it not, therefore, dangerous to abrogate, nullify, or repeal it now, after a lapse of thirty-four years, simply because of its supposed unconstitutionality? Are not the friends of repeal treading a path that is beset on every hand with imminent danger? Open up this question now, and do you not annihilate the very principle which constitutes the foundation upon which all your acquisitions of territory rests?

Mr. PHILLIPS. Will the gentleman allow me to ask him a question?

Mr. CAMPBELL. I hope the honorable gentleman will excuse me, simply for the reason that I will not be able to complete my remarks in an hour, as I have some little matters to look after by the wayside. I usually yield the floor to opponents, and refuse to yield to friends, as I have done on this occasion. Under other circumstances, it would give me great pleasure to yield to the honorable gentleman from Alabama.

I said in the outset, Mr. Chairman, that I was in favor of preserving inviolate every feature of the Constitution in its original purity. I am for extending to the institution of slavery everything that was yielded to it by that instrument, but nothing more. And now, sir, for a few moments,

I propose to ascertain what was intended to be secured to slavery, though in doing so, I shall but call attention to facts which I had occasion to present four years ago. Let me, however, preface what I have to say on this subject, by stating that, in whatever light I may be regarded, either on this floor or elsewhere, I am not one of those who war upon the constitutional rights of the South, or upon the sensibilities of her citizens. I have studied the early history of this institution, and I do not join in the indiscriminate denunciations in which some men in the North indulge on this subject. I have no bitter anathemas to pronounce against those who hold slaves, from the necessities which surround them, and treat them with kindness; for I can never, as a northern man, shut my eyes to the fact which is recorded by the unerring pen of History, that the introduction of slavery into the infant colonies, was, to a great extent, the result of the cupidity of northern men, who engaged in the slave trade for the purposes of gain. And, sir, I have little regard for what is commonly called "British philanthropy," on this subject of American slavery. I seldom read one of those addresses from British anti-slavery societies, which often taunt us with allusions to the inconsistency of our position, which claims for our form of government a Republican character, and yet recognizes slavery, without feeling a sort of fiery indignation.

Sir, British oppression inflicted the curse upon us, as I shall show. British interests tore from his native land the down-trodden African, transplanted him to our shores, and fastened upon him the galling fetters of slavery! British power prevented our forefathers from ridding the land of this evil whilst yet in its infancy and under their control! British tyranny sought to enslave our fathers who had fled to these distant shores in pursuit of freedom! British cruelty employed, during the war of 1812, the merciless savage to butcher with tomahawk and scalping knife, the pioneer mother and her helpless children upon the frontiers of the Northwest! And, sir, until I can forget the tales of oppression, cruelty, and wrong which my ancestors narrated to me in early boyhood, I shall have little regard for what is called British sympathy. Knowing as I do, too, that whilst I was yet an infant of but two years, exposed on the frontier to the atrocities of the savages employed by Great Britain, it was the brave men of a slaveholding State—the gallant Kentuckians—who dashed into the wilderness, and under those heroic men, Harrison and Johnson, drove back the foe, I find no room in my heart to sympathize with the doubtfully sincere efforts of British philanthropy to cure the evils which may now afflict our land, and which their Government fastened upon it. As long, therefore, as slavery confines itself strictly to the limits guaranteed by the Constitution, I make no war upon it myself, nor do I sympathize in the efforts of those who do so without the consent of the slaveholder himself. When it seeks to go beyond the power and spirit of that Constitution, I stand in unyielding opposition to its progress.

It becomes important that we should have a clear and distinct understanding of what is secured to slavery by the Constitution. It is nowhere expressly recognized in that instrument, except it be in the provisions which relate to fugitives from service and to representation. The power to extend

it cannot, therefore, be claimed upon anything patent upon the face of the instrument. If the power is claimed by reason of any ambiguity of the Constitution, the only correct means of ascertaining the extent of its power is to resort to the circumstances which surrounded those who framed it, the purposes which they sought to accomplish, and the spirit which prevailed in their councils in regard to it. The spirit and true meaning of the compact is that which ought to be enforced. I propose, briefly, to inquire what the framers of the Constitution wished to accomplish in reference to African slavery. I rejoice that the gentleman from Georgia has, with so much eloquence and feeling, carried back our thoughts to the good old days of 1775, when patriotism was unaffected by the influences which seem to overwhelm it in these degenerate times. I am right glad that he has reminded us of the good old Whig doctrines of the Revolution. I subscribe to them fully and heartily; but will the honorable gentleman do the same? Where stood the Whigs of Georgia then? I must again call the attention of the gentleman, as I did four years since, to the principles which animated the breasts of the men of Georgia in the glorious days of our revolutionary struggle! They assembled on the 12th day of January, 1775, to take measures to repel the wrongs which Great Britain had inflicted. They spoke as follows:

"We, therefore, the Representatives of the extensive District of Darien, in the Colony of Georgia, having now assembled in Congress, by authority and free choice of the inhabitants of said District, now freed from their fetters, do resolve:

"5. To show the world that we are not influenced by any contracted or interested motives, but a general philanthropy for ALL MANKIND, of whatever climate, language, or complexion, we hereby declare our disapprobation and abhorrence of the unnatural practice of slavery in America, (however the uncultivated state of our country or other specious arguments may plead for it), a practice founded in injustice and cruelty, and highly dangerous to our liberties, (as well as lives,) debasing part of our fellow-creatures below men, and corrupting the virtue and morals of the rest, and is laying the basis of that liberty we contend for (and which we pray the Almighty to continue to the latest posterity) upon a very wrong foundation. We therefore resolve, at all times, to use our utmost endeavors for the manumission of our slaves in this colony, upon the most safe and equitable footing for the master and themselves."

The people of the southern provinces all spoke then in similar tones. In Virginia, resolves were adopted in almost every county, declaring one of the objects of the Revolution to be to check the further progress of slavery. Washington himself, whilst yet a farmer of Fairfax, presided at one of these meetings; and I beg of honorable gentlemen now representing the "Old Dominion," who profess to revere the memories of their Washington, their Jefferson, and their Patrick Henry, to recur to the early history of their Commonwealth, and learn what was the spirit of those patriots who figured in the Revolution and formed the Constitution, in reference to slavery.

Mr. Chairman, in 1774, Thomas Jefferson, the immortal author of the Declaration of Independence, wrote to the Continental Congress, which assembled at Philadelphia to form a "Union," as follows:

"For the most trifling reasons, and sometimes for no conceivable reason at all, his Majesty has rejected laws of the most salutary tendency. THE ABOLITION OF DOMESTIC SLAVERY IS THE GREATEST OBJECT OF DESIRE IN THESE COLONIES, where it was unhappily introduced in their infant state. But previous to the enfranchisement of the slaves we have, it is necessary to exclude all further im-

portations from Africa. Yet our repeated attempts to effect this by prohibitions, and by imposing duties which might amount to prohibition, have been hitherto defeated by his Majesty's negative. Thus preferring the immediate advantages of a few African corsairs to the LASTING INTEREST of the American States, and to the RIGHTS OF HUMAN NATURE DEEPLY WOUNDED BY THIS INFAMOUS TRAFFIC!"

He subsequently, in his original draft of the Declaration, inserted a similar paragraph as one of the causes of the Revolution.

But I cannot now pursue this inquiry further. I have shown enough, it seems to me, to convince even the gentleman from Georgia that it is he, and not I, who has abandoned, on this subject, the good old doctrines of the Whigs of 1775. In that Continental Congress of 1774, a solemn pledge to check the increase of slavery was subscribed, by the patriot Representatives from all the Provinces, including Maryland, Virginia, and both the Carolinas.

And yet, sir, what a spectacle is now presented? Behold the contrast! Then it was declared a just cause of revolution by the Whigs of 1775-'6, that the Executive head of the Government—the King of Great Britain—had vetoed the laws enacted by them to suppress slavery; now my honorable friend from Georgia claims that it is in strict consonance with that ancient Whig doctrine to repeal an act which has been acquiesced in for the third of a century, in order that slavery may be spread over the immense plains and valleys of Nebraska. We have no King George to trouble us with his vetoes now, but we have an Executive at the other end of the avenue, whose vast patronage and official influence is thrown into the scale for the increase and perpetuation of slavery. Sir, like the men of old, I resist it. I vie with my honorable friend in admiration of the Whigs of 1775; and I submit to the committee, and to the country the question, which of us follows with most fidelity the path which they marked for posterity by the blood of the Revolution?

Subsequent to these meetings and these resolves came the Declaration of Independence. Then that war, that glorious war, when Freedom conquered! Carrying out the great principle in reference to slavery, the ordinance of 1787 was adopted, and Jefferson, with his own hand, prepared the clause which excluded slavery from every foot of territory then belonging to the Confederacy, and it was adopted by these men of the Revolution. It was under influences such as these, with feelings such as these, in regard to slavery, that the convention, composed of the identical men who had so recently before proclaimed those sentiments to the world, adopted our Federal Constitution. Can any one doubt, then, what they meant? If, therefore, its terms are ambiguous, I fearlessly base, upon this array of facts, the proposition that it was their purpose to restrict slavery to the limits it then occupied; to separate the Federal Government from all connection with it, and to leave the question of its final abolition to the States in which it existed. This—this, sir, is the platform upon which I stand to-day. It is the position which I shall continue to occupy through "weal or woe," because I believe it to be the position in which the framers of the Constitution left it. I occupied this ground through the contest of 1850; and believing that the Union was never formed, the Constitution never adopted, for the purpose of extending slavery, I shall oppose every proposition for its exten-

sion, now and at all times, through all the storms, and strifes, and conflicts which may arise; and, if it need be so, amid the taunts, and jeers, and scoffs of those who may seek to cast odium upon me, either "in Congress or out of it."

But, Mr. Chairman, I have high authority, of a more modern character, for maintaining the position that although the Constitution gives no power to extend slavery, it does confer upon Congress the power to exclude it from Territories. That power has been exercised under almost every Administration since the organization of the Government. In the Texas annexation resolutions, the clause excluding slavery north of 36° 30' was introduced by Mr. DOUGLAS himself. The Oregon bill containing the principle was voted for by members of both parties from the North and South, and was approved by Mr. Polk. The gentleman from Georgia has alluded in terms of high commendation to Daniel Webster, and to his celebrated compromise speech of March 7, 1850, and yet he seemed to take especial care to conceal the important fact that, even in that speech, so highly lauded by gentlemen from the South, the great "Expounder of the Constitution" reasserted the doctrine which the gentleman now disclaims, that Congress had the power conferred on it to exclude slavery from the Territories. He distinctly declared that upon the question of power he occupied his old position, and that he would exercise the power whenever a case was presented which rendered the proviso necessary. He said, in reference to the Territories of Utah and New Mexico, that the climate, the soil, &c., had excluded African slavery therefrom, and that it was useless to reenact the statutes which God had made. He asserted that for these reasons, and under the circumstances which then prevailed, he would not vote for the Wilmot proviso, because there was no practical necessity for it in order to exclude slavery, and its passage would be regarded as a mere taunt to the South. But, sir, he never to the day of his death abandoned the position that the power to pass it was vested in Congress.

Mr. Clay too, occupied the same ground; and, having thus traced this question of constitutional power from, and shown that my position is fortified by, the action of the great statesmen of the country, I shall continue to occupy it.

Mr. EWING. Will the gentleman allow me a solitary word? Do I understand the gentleman from Ohio as occupying the position which Mr. Clay occupied in reference to the exclusion of slavery from the Territories?

Mr. CAMPBELL. I have stated that I believe Congress has the power to exclude slavery, and I have given my reasons. I am sustained both by Mr. Webster and Mr. Clay, as I can prove.

Mr. EWING. Will the gentleman answer the question I asked him?

Mr. CAMPBELL. I have answered. Will the honorable gentleman, who so much admires the character of Mr. Clay, adopt his views in regard to slavery? For his particular information I will quote what he says in reference to its existence, as well as to the idea that it should be perpetuated. I will show gentlemen from the South who admire that deceased statesman, that, if they seek to repeal the Missouri compromise for the purpose of perpetuating slavery, in violation of the principles upon which the Revolution was fought, this measure will

fall far short of effecting their purpose. The reading may tend, too, to relieve me from some of that odium which Mr. Clay's friends would cast upon us by their taunts of "free-soilism."

I will ask of my friend near me, [Mr. KERR,] to whose kindness I am already indebted, to do me the favor to read the extract from Mallory's Life of Clay. It will sound better, too, from the lips of a good Clay Whig from the South.

Mr. KERR read the extract, as follows:

"What would they who thus reproach us have done? If they would repress all tendencies towards liberty, and ultimate emancipation, they must do more than put down the benevolent efforts of this society. They must go back to the era of our liberty and independence, and muzzle the cannon which thunders its annual joyous return. They must revive the slave trade, with all its train of atrocities."

"They must blow out the moral lights around us, and extinguish that greatest torch of all which America presents to a benighted world, pointing the way to their rights, their liberties, and their happiness. And when they have achieved all these purposes, their work will be yet incomplete. They must penetrate the human soul, and eradicate the light of reason and the love of liberty. Then, and not till then, when universal darkness and despair prevail, can you perpetuate slavery and repress all sympathies, and all humane and benevolent efforts among freemen, in behalf of the unhappy portion of our race who are doomed to bondage."

"Our friends who are cursed with this greatest of human evils, deserve the kindest attention and consideration. Their property and their safety are both involved. But the liberal and candid among them will not, cannot, expect that every project to deliver our country from it is to be crushed because of a possible and ideal danger."

Mr. CAMPBELL. Such were the opinions of Mr. Clay, pronounced in this Hall in the year 1827. They coincide with the principles declared by Washington when he presided over meetings held in Virginia; they coincide with the principles of Thomas Jefferson when he penned the Declaration of Independence. They were the sentiments of the First Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia, in the year 1774, and were then avowed by all the distinguished statesmen of the South. They said that they regarded slavery as a curse, and that it should not be extended. They declared that one of their objects in forming a Union was to check the progress of the evil. They resolved to abolish it from the land, as a "curse" and a "blight." Yet now, in the face of these historical facts, because we of the North oppose the further extension of slavery, we are to be sneered at as "Free-Soilers" and "fanatical agitators."

A few days since, sir, something was said, in a taunting strain, by the honorable member from Virginia, [Mr. SMITH,] which I must give a passing notice. He was discussing the question of slavery, and "agitating in Congress" that question in violation of the platform of his party, and in violation of the resolution of the last Congress. I had not had the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with him, and most certainly had no unkind feelings towards him; but observing his readiness in debate, and not desiring to consume any portion of his time, I wished to indulge in a little matter of pleasantry, and at the same time exhibit the absurdity of the platforms which had been erected in 1852 to stop agitation. I made a point of order on him, as I had a right to do under the rules, because in that way I should not consume any of his time; and having no purpose whatever to interfere with his rights or give him offense or annoyance. I allude to the matter for the purpose of putting myself right before the

committee, and because it has been said that his reply may have been designed as personally offensive. I urgently sought the floor at the time, in order that I might at once disclaim any design to offend him or to interfere with his rights; but it was refused. There existed no reason why I should have wished to offend him, because, to my knowledge, he never did me wrong, and it would have been in violation of my very nature to have wished to offend him under such circumstances. I think I might in perfect safety appeal to his colleagues, who have served with me here in times past, whose politics are opposite to mine—in fact to any member, to bear me witness, that I never have violated the courtesies due from one member to another, and that it is not my habit to offend members upon this floor, or elsewhere. I much prefer at all times to cultivate the social qualities of the heart, rather than those which produce personal animosities or hostile feelings.

The honorable member said: "I despise a trick worse than I do a Free-Soiler." The extent to which this was intended to apply to me, or was designed to offend, was not very clear, because I had always been a member of the Whig party, having voted first for Mr. Clay in 1832, and last for General Scott in 1852. I appealed to him for the floor, in order to have the matter explained and understood at the time. But, sir, having discharged his artillery upon me, he took to the chaparral, and refused me the poor privilege either of setting myself right in reference to my own feelings, or of understanding the meaning of his remark. To say the least of it, sir, I could not but regard this as unkind, after he had yielded the floor to others, knowing that I had ever been—as honorable gentlemen will bear witness—in the habit of yielding the floor to my opponents in debate when they have sought it out of my time. Never in my life have I refused that courtesy to a political opponent, or to one opposing my views of the question under consideration; and, sir, may I sink ten thousand fathoms below the earth, never to rise, whenever I shall refuse that privilege to one whose sensibilities I may have wounded, or who may suppose I have intended to offend him. But, as though not content with thus shutting down on me, he added, according to the report as published: "If the gentleman wants to see me, he can find me when the House adjourns." Now, Mr. Chairman, abstractly, that was rather a singular announcement. I did not understand what was meant. It was too indefinite—rather ambiguous. It was possible that it was intended as an invitation to meet him, and talk the matter over in a friendly way, or perhaps to take a "whisky toddy," or something of that sort. [Laughter.] To be sure, I rather lean to the side of the Maine liquor law; but, when I do yield to temptation, it is generally about that time of day. [Renewed laughter.] And I might have considered most favorably such a proposition just then, but the honorable gentleman did not telegraph me exactly in the temper to lead my mind to such a conclusion. [Laughter.]

Mr. McMULLIN, (interrupting.) Is the gentleman from Ohio aware of the fact that my colleague is not present? I beg leave to say for him that my colleague never takes a toddy. [Laughter.]

Mr. CAMPBELL. I supposed your colleague

was in the Hall, as I understood he was present when I commenced my remarks. If he "never takes a toddy," some of his colleagues do.

Mr. McMULLIN. I will say to my friend from Ohio, for I certainly have a right to call him such—

Mr. CAMPBELL. Certainly. You and I can never quarrel, I think.

Mr. McMULLIN. I will most cheerfully represent my colleague in that particular. [Laughter.]

Mr. CAMPBELL. Now you are talking to the point. There is something specific—something definite in that. I understand my honorable friend, and it is possible that I may incline to suspend my rigid temperance rule. [Laughter.] If I should, I have only to say to him, in the very pertinent language of his colleague, "If the gentleman wants to see me, he can find me when the House adjourns." [Laughter.] "These interruptions necessarily agitate me, and disturb the current of my thoughts." [Renewed laughter.]

Mr. Chairman, the honorable gentleman, [Mr. SMITH,] being the advocate of the Maine liquor law, did not mean that. [Laughter.] Nor did he mean, I suppose, that there was something particularly fascinating in his personal appearance—that his beauty was such as so to attract me that I should wish to find him after the House adjourned. If it were anything in that way, I can inform the honorable gentleman that these galleries, filled with "Heaven's last best gift to man" would furnish far stronger attractions to my fancy than anything I have discovered in his personal charms. [Laughter.]

But, again, it may have been thought that there was something strikingly curious in his personal appearance that would excite my curiosity, and lead me to try and "find him when the House adjourns." Why, sir, there are so many natural curiosities in Washington that I do not find time to see many of the sights. I notice, as I pass along the avenue, among others, a sign of one representing an enormous sheep, (a "Bakewell" I believe it is called,) where the music is thrown into the bargain; and being excessively fond of music, I should patronize that exhibition, if I desired to gratify my curiosity. [Laughter.]

But, Mr. Chairman, I really do not yet exactly understand why the honorable gentleman should have dealt seemingly so unjustly by me, nor why he refused to allow me the privilege of a perfect understanding of his meaning at the time, or of disclaiming any intention to annoy or offend him. I stand here, sir, the representative of as patriotic and as high-minded a constituency as his. Whatever differences of opinion may exist between us on the political questions which arise here, the State of Virginia has no truer advocate in him of her constitutional rights (as I understand them) than she has in me. I am allied to that Old Dominion by sacred ties, and I would not willfully do her, or her representatives in this House, any wrong. Nor will I submit tamely to any wrong which they may seek to inflict upon me, or upon my constituency. I admit her constitutional rights in reference to slavery, and I will be the last man to interfere with them. By virtue of these constitutional rights, the gentleman may, perhaps, when at home, buy and sell purer and better men than either he or I. I shall not controvert that right; but, sir, when under that same Constitution, he is

sent here to represent his constituents, and I am sent to represent mine, we enter this Hall on terms of perfect equality. I acknowledge no superiority, except that which he may fairly win here in the field of intellectual strife. He has no right, under that Constitution, to attempt to overawe me in the discharge of my duties in this House; and, so help me God, he never shall succeed in any such effort. I acknowledge his right, sir, and that of every member from the South, to come here and advocate his principles in regard to slavery, and every other question that may arise. That right is mine equally with them. It is the right of my constituents, too; and if he comes to play overseer here, and cracks his lash over the backs of my constituents, or over mine, I shall resist the act with all my power, intellectual or physical, as circumstances may require, to the last extremity.

As I have before said, Mr. Chairman, I have not the personal acquaintance of the honorable gentleman; and I repeat, that in what I said the other day, and in what I now say, I disclaim any design to give personal offense, or to do more than is necessary to vindicate my own rights, and the rights of my constituents in this Congress of the nation. The character of our future intercourse I leave with him. I desire that my relations with him, and with all men, shall be those of friendship. If, however, he wishes to press a personal hostility because of my sentiments on the question of slavery, or for any other reason, to use his own language, he can every day "find me when the House adjourns." If he desires to meet me in friendship, I stand ready for such a meeting. If, on the other hand, he comes as my enemy, I simply ask that he will so telegraph me in unequivocal terms.

Mr. Chairman, in my digression upon this personal matter I have lost much of the time which I intended to appropriate to a discussion of other features of the proposed repeal of the Missouri compromise. My hour is nearly spent. The other points which I proposed to discuss must be left for a future occasion, or to others who are more able to do them justice. In conclusion, I can but say, that upon this question, as upon every other which involves the extension of slavery, I stand by the Constitution. I stand where Washington stood! I stand where Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, stood! I stand where Patrick Henry, where Lee, and where Harrison stood! I stand, sir, where the patriots of all Virginia stood in her best days! I stand, sir, where Adams, and Sherman, and Jay, and Hooper, and Caswell, and Gadsden, and the Rutledges stood during the revolutionary contest for freedom! To adopt the language of another, as evidence of my respect for his position on this question:

"I stand upon the ordinance of 1787. There the path is marked by the blood of the Revolution. I stand in company with the 'men of '87,' their locks wet with the mists of the Jordan over which they passed—their garments purple with the waters of the Red Sea, through which they led us of old to this land of promise. With them to point the way, however dark the present, hope shines brightly on the future; and, discerning their footprints in my path, I shall tread it with unflinching trust."

[Here the hammer fell.]